

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2004**

**Board of Finance Members Present:** R. Pagani-Chmn, V. Gerber, M. Joyse, B. Pinto, J. Rachek

**Board of Selectmen Members Present:** D. Milanovich-First Sel, A. Miller (arr 8 pm), N. Way, P. Charter, D. Frawley, M. Stupinski

**Board of Education Members Present:** D. Roberson-Chmn, L. Gerber, D. Keune, M. Blanchette

**Others Present:** R. Packman-Supt of Schools

Board of Finance Chairman Robert Pagani opened the meeting at 7:35 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Dr. Packman passed out a list of concerns that had been identified at a meeting on August 17, 2004 when school and town officials got together. It was the consensus of that group that this meeting should be held, and that these three boards should get together to discuss the subject of how to dispel the misconceptions taxpayers may have regarding the budget process.

The three items that all groups agreed that needed to be addressed were misinformation, voter apathy and lack of information. There was discussion regarding putting the information on the town's web site, doing mailings, or hand outs. It was agreed that the budget is a complicated and large document and not easily understood when you are not part of the process. The majority of those in attendance felt that mailings were better than the website, although the website is a free vehicle for this information. The First Selectman stated that the budget for the quarterly newsletter would not support additional mailings.

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It was agreed that compliance with election laws was necessary. Dissemination of facts about the budget can be done but not advocating one position or another. Mr. Pagani stated that he researched the yes and no votes. He found that for years where there was an increase in the mill rate, the no votes were at a steady level but the yes votes were not. He asked how to change this? Mr. Keune stated that voter registration is down. Dr. Packman stated that senior citizens tend to vote more often than younger people. He also stressed that education benefits society. Mr. Roberson stated that we need to remind people of the benefit to society, some people don't feel they are getting anything for their tax dollars when it comes to education, especially when they do not have children in the system.

Mr. Stupinski felt that it is an economic issue; how much is it going to cost me. Mrs. Way felt that informing the public of when the voting would take place was getting better and should be a priority.

Dr. Packman stated that as the budgets are cut each year, especially in the capital improvements area, there are pent up needs that won't go away. Mr. Milanovich stated that the perception is that the first budget presented is fat because it will be cut. The raw budget is the one presented and the people hear in the newspaper that it will be some huge tax increase. The Board of Finance has to reduce it. People feel that if they vote no, it will be reduced down more and more. Mr. Joyse felt that this puts the Board of Finance in the middle and that sometimes the board is cutting things that they don't know the impact of. Mr. Pagani stated that it is the only way to get a budget passed.

Mr. Milanovich asked what the goals should be for this budget season. Tax payer questionnaires were mentioned along with focus group activity. It was decided to set the next meeting for November 4 at 7:30 pm.

The meeting was closed by Chairman Pagani at 8:45 pm.

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_  
Lori Smith, Clerk